**Project 4-Visual Mapping**

Ebony Madison

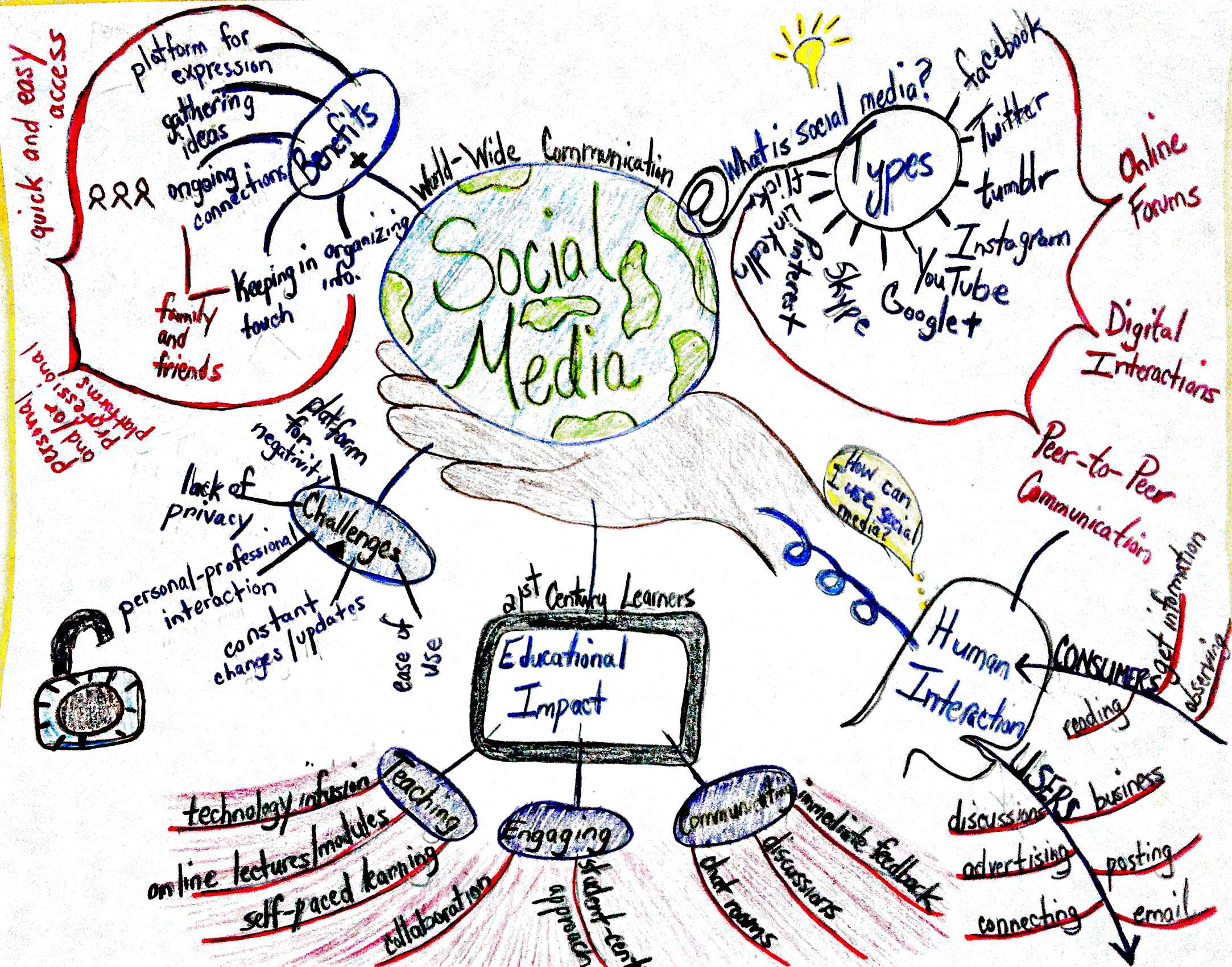
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**Introduction**

According to Novak and Canas (2008), “one of the reasons concept mapping is so powerful for the facilitation of meaningful learning is that it serves as a kind of *template* or *scaffold* to help to organize knowledge and to structure it”. Using concept mapping to organize information and data allows you to narrow your focus and organize it into key ideas/ concepts. In this project, I developed a hand-drawn and electronic visual map based on the perceptions of social media. These concept maps were developed based on information gathered from various research findings, data analysis of perceptions from the young adult population category, and knowledge obtained from readings by Rogers, Gladwell, and Ellsworth, based on Diffusion of Innovations and its effects on society and education. This project will describe the process and comparisons of both maps, as well as my reflection on visual- concept mapping development.

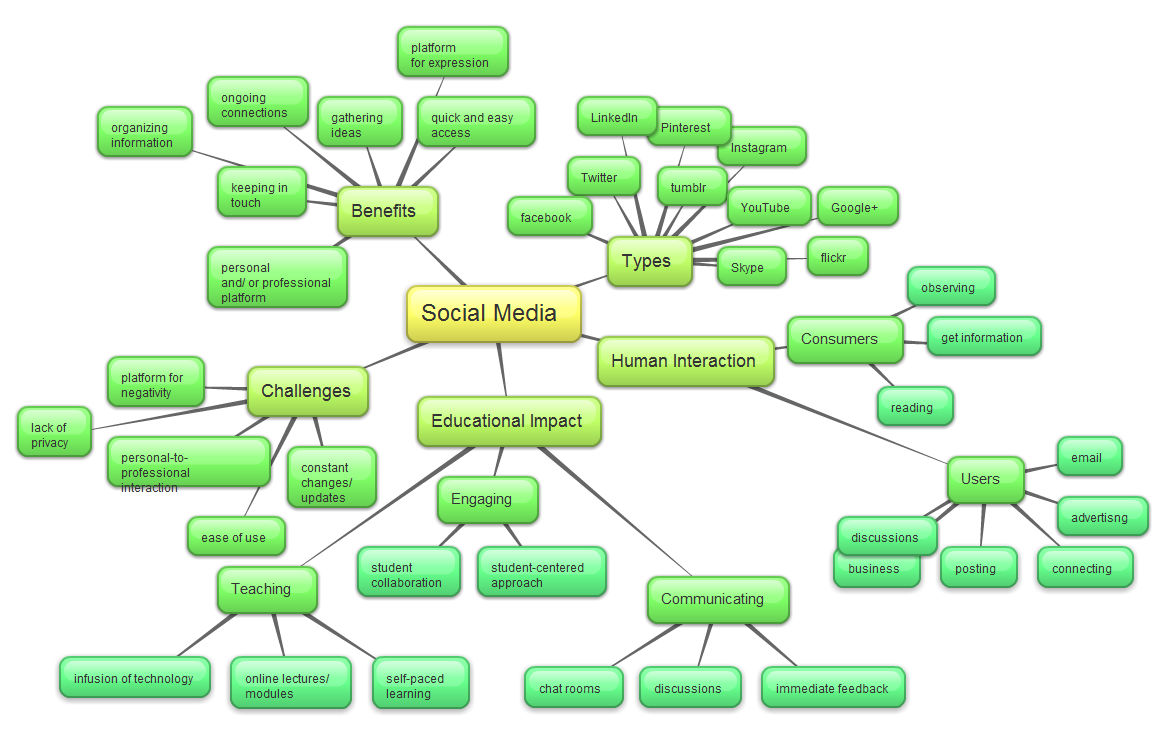
**Hand-Drawn Map Description/ Comparison**

This visual-concept map was developed based on the common trends I’ve encountered throughout my weeks of study in the Diffusion of Innovations course. Based on my knowledge obtained over the weeks, I decided to focus on five key concepts and build my map around these concepts. These concepts include types of social media, human interaction, educational impact, benefits, and challenges of social media usage. The hand-drawn map is a lot more detail oriented, as it includes graphics, color-coding, and additional, related side-notes or questions. Overall, the hand-drawn map provided more freedom of expression and less restriction on how I structured, displayed, and expressed my ideas. I think this communicates more information.



**Web-Based Application Map Description/ Comparison**

The second map was developed using the web-based application, Bubble.us. The online map includes the same information provided on the hand-drawn map. This map is similarly organized based on the five key concepts- types of social media, human interaction, educational impact, benefits, and challenges of social media usage. The web-based map was more restrictive, as it does not allow the opportunity to include graphics and provides a general structure with minimal opportunities to manipulate. While this map provides the same information, I think students may learn more from the hand-drawn map because the graphics provide additional information.



**Reflection**

Throughout the development process of the visual-concept map I learned how important it is to organize ideas. By organizing and structuring ideas, it allows each concept to take its rightful place within your cognitive understanding. Over the past few weeks, we’ve read, learned, and analyzed a lot of information about social media and diffusion of innovation. As we learned more information, the concepts became jumbled and harder to conceptualize but this concept map project allowed me to pull out key components and organize the ideas in my mind. Now I have a better understanding of social media concepts, perspectives, and how diffusion of innovations relates to social media.

While the hand-drawn and web-based application map was developed using the same information, I think they provide a different level of detail and understanding. The hand-drawn visual-concept was less restrictive in terms of expression. Because I was able to hand-draw the map, I had the freedom to express the ideas through graphics, words, various directionality of text, and include additional side-notes or questions. I think this additional information would provide more visual understanding and the graphics would provide more details. All of these components make the map more engaging, attention-grabbing, and understandable.

While the web-based tool is more restrictive, it is a cleaner, more concise way of presenting the information. For students who are easily distracted, it may be more beneficial to have an alternative map that solely provides the text. The hierarchy of the information seems a little more defined without the graphics. Overall, I think the web-based map would also be beneficial and informative to a learner as well.

Color-coding was a common thread in both formats. The web-based application provided suggested, standard color-coding, which made the use of this tool easier. With the hand-drawn map, I kept the colors consistent throughout all five focus areas to show a clear distinction in hierarchy of information. The color-coding would be beneficial to the students because it will allow them to structure the concepts in their memory based on the importance of information. Without color-coding, I think the concept maps would be harder to understand.

Overall, I think I would use the hand-drawn visual-concept map to achieve the learning goal with the students. The hand-drawn map is more detail-oriented. The combination of graphics, words, and the freedom to include any additional information that is needed makes this an essential tool for learning. Any learning opportunity that involves a complex concept that needs to be organized into parts would greatly benefit from using a concept map to structure their ideas in their mind.

This project initially started out as a huge challenge. I felt overwhelmed with the amount of information and didn’t know where or how to start breaking the information into parts. After reading through the articles provided in the assignment module and studying the data analysis, I was able to develop the five focus areas based on common threads. This immediately released a huge burden. Once I decided on the focus areas, all the corresponding information fell into place. I enjoyed designing the hand-drawn map and all that I learned from this project.

References

Canas, A.J. & Novak, J.D. (2008). The theory underlying concept maps and how to construct and use them. Florida Institute for Human and Machine Cognition, retrieved from <http://cmap.ihmc.us/Publications/ResearchPapers/TheoryUnderlyingConceptMaps.pdf>

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